THE MYSTERY OF SUFFERING

BARING GOULD.

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MYSTERY OF SUFFERING.

SIX LECTURES,

BY THE

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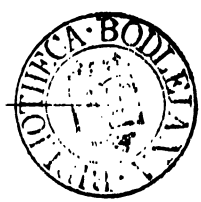

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I.

THE MYSTERY OF SUFFERING.

JOB x. 8.

Thine hands have made me and fashioned me together round about; yet Thou dost destroy me.

IT is very seldom that one can look into a newspaper without finding in it a record of crime or accident, which has left a wound somewhere, in some heart. At one time an act of violence has been committed, and many a spirit is troubled and rendered desolate by the hand that dealt the blow. At another time a boat has been upset, and orphans' tears trickle, and widows sob. We do not see the tears, or hear the sob, but behind the brief paragraph that informs us of the event, we know what lies. Sometimes a bank fails, and what anguish does the short extract from the Gazette cover!—the clerk's life-long savings, the portions of children, the only means of subsistence of old people gone. The trembling hand that covers the eyes, the

quivering breast, the head bowed on the table, and the trickling stream of tears that runs over it—there is nothing of this in the paragraph, yet we can picture it. We know that the few words in the paper involve a vast amount of misery.

I have got an old Icelandic book, printed in Denmark, bound in England. It was written eight hundred years ago. It was printed seventy years ago. It was bound the other day.

When I read the book I find it is a long sad story of fighting and revenges, of homes made desolate, of men dying cruel deaths, of women weeping, eight hundred years ago. And in one place, the paper of my book is splashed with blood. That red-brown stain tells of some wound, some suffering to the printer. What it was I cannot tell, it happened seventy years ago ; and he, whoever he was, in Copenhagen, is now in his grave. But it remains, it survives him—this record of his pain. And on the new cover of my book, on the new English binding, is a teardrop. Eight hundred years ago, seventy years ago, and to-day ; one volume tells of pain at all those intervals.

I have seen in Sussex an ancient mud deposit now turned to hard stone. Before man

appeared on the earth, this was laid on the shores of a vast tidal lake. When heavy rain fell, the drops dinted the soft ooze, and when the tide next rose, it filled the little hollows, and covered everything with a fine deposit of smooth, soft, slime. The ooze in time was petrified, and other formations were piled over it, and then all was lifted high above the sea. But now, this ancient Wealden mud-bed is worked as slate, and used for roofing. You may separate the films of stone, and there you find the impressions of the raindrops which fell thousands of thousands of years ago.

In the volume of the book of Earth's generations the tears of Heaven are noted. Who saw them when they fell? Who thought of them through the lapse of ages? And now that which was hidden is revealed. The record of the weeping skies is brought to light. The secrets of the hidden chamber of Nature are proclaimed on the housetops. Sometimes, when I have studied these petrified raindrops, and put my fingers into the print they struck in the soft ooze, it has come on me with force, that He who has written these down on tables of stone, must have recorded somewhere the tears, countless and bitter, which fall on the earth

and which are by men unnoted or disregarded, and to many are unknown.

And not the tears only.

Those stone pages of the Weald tell of something more. They are in places furrowed with the ripple mark of receding wavelets, as the tide ebbed away. And because so roughened, they prevent slipping, and are therefore much used in Sussex for pavements.

Do you see how every little breath of wind that sighed against the shore was written down? Surely, if the record of these feeble, fitful, thoughtless breathings were counted worthy to be kept through the lapse of ages, how much more the weary, heavy, despondent sighs which break from overburdened breasts of suffering mortals?

Who does not know that suffering and sorrow surrounds him on every side? There is not a little parish into which it has not penetrated; there is not a house into which it has not entered; there is not a human breast which will not, sooner or later, in greater or less degree, be invaded by it. And who knows what are the griefs of those who are his nearest? Who can measure, who can weigh, who appraise them? A tear is but a tiny drop, but it is the

extract of great anguish. A sigh is but a little breath, but it is the relief of a heart that is bursting with sorrow.

I do not speak of those great external misfortunes, those miseries which are patent to all eyes that choose to look, such as bereavement, sickness, an accidental loss of a sense, or a limb, failure of means, and the like, though these are sad enough, and sore enough to endure; but of the many hidden sorrows that wear and consume the soul within, mental distresses, affections wrecked and torn and drifted on the wild ocean of misery—hidden sorrows that like the moth gnaw through the fibres of the soul, and leave it riddled as by arrows; sorrows known, it may be, to none, and made doubly intense by their being kept concealed, sorrows unsuspected by the nearest, sorrows for which there is no medicine that earth can supply, no consolation that man can offer.

How often are women called upon thus to suffer!

Who can imagine the silent agonies that they have endured under a placid or a smiling exterior? O! the piteous tragedies performed by one lone actress in mute vehemence behind an unlifted curtain. The house is empty, the

lights are out, and not a sound is heard; but the play is played out to the last end without a word spoken, a scrap of costume, on muffled boards, with a black gulf for scenery.

A priest sees more of sorrows than does the ordinary run of people; he knows the prevalence of suffering in its multitudinous forms, more than others. He is brought face to face with so much of it, the anguished body, the sick mind, the racked soul.

But after all, the bruised and broken and weary hearts that are laid open before him are only a very few as compared with the many who suffer, a little handful out of a vast store, a few grains out of a great heap. A traveller goes into a far land, and brings home with him a bunch of the flowers he has gathered, and gives them to a botanist, and says: "These are samples of the herbs that cover the fields and mountains of the country I have explored." And from that bunch the botanist learns the main facts about the flora of that land. So those cases which come before the priest's eye are the handful of the flowers of earth; he studies them, and looks round, and says with a sigh, "They are all *cruciferæ*."

Every great pain and sorrow produces a

marked effect on him who has endured it. It either hardens or it melts. It sweetens or it embitters. It opens or it closes the heart. It sometimes produces a cold, cynical spirit, which disbelieves in love, in hope, and doubts everybody, even God: an effect which even the heathen seem to have observed when they fabled that Niobe, on the loss of her seven sons and seven daughters, was turned, in the excess of her sorrow, into stone.* But, on the other hand, it sometimes deepens the spiritual life, softens the feelings towards others, opens fresh springs in a formerly barren land, and produces flowers from what was a dry waste.

It is very necessary that we should know how to use suffering, so that it may advantage us; that we should be able to learn its teachings, and follow the indications it gives. I hope, in the following lectures, to be able to make in some way clear to you what the advantages are which may be reaped from pain. Let me now, at the outset, give you warning against a wrong use of it, against a lesson which it is not designed to teach.

And we cannot do better for this purpose

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* Compare Montaigne, Essay 2.

than take Job, the type of suffering, and see what it is that the great poem of the suffering man was written to inculcate. That book stands in the Bible as a solemn protest against a tendency common to Jewish and Christian speculators alike, a tendency destructive to all the good that suffering was calculated to effect. It does not reveal to us what God's purposes are in allowing suffering to exist. They remain secret, or at least can only be discovered in part. Suffering will teach its own lessons, unless a vicious dogmatism on its cause and purpose blind the eye to the truth. And the Book of Job was written to show what this vicious dogmatism was; and it is well for us also to know it in order to avoid it, for otherwise suffering will be all in vain.

At the time when the Book of Job was written, a theory of pain was held, which became pretty general among the Jews, and received its condemnation later from the mouth of Christ. According to this theory suffering was simply retributive, and not in any way remedial. Where there was pain, there there was sin. When many centuries after the times of Job a man that was born blind was brought to Christ, the Jews said that either this man or his parents must have sinned, otherwise he could

not have suffered the privation of sight. Our Lord wholly denounced this doctrine; it was utterly false, the blindness of the man was not a punishment. In the experience of life the Jews found that their favourite theory was obliged to bend to large exceptions, that the facts of experience could not be brought to fit the inadequate formula, and therefore Rabbinism invented whole categories of sins, and made it so impossible for man to pass a day without a lapse of some sort, that it was always feasible to account for a misfortune by referring it to a transgression; and if a real one did not exist, then to one manufactured by tradition. It was a sin to eat with unwashen hands, to stand on a bench when praying, to hold the feet crossed, to mispronounce the vowels, and omit a syllable in the Chema.*

Job is described as a model of excellence, as a man perfect and upright, one that feared God and eschewed evil. He was "the father of the faithful, and of him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon him;" he "caused the widow's heart to sing for joy." He was careful

* See passim Beracoth, Mischna ii. and iii. and the Gemara thereon.

to do strict justice and not to accept persons. He "put on righteousness" as a garment, and his "judgment was as a robe and a diadem." He was full of tender pity to the sufferers, "eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame, a father to the poor." He "did not despise the cause of his manservant or his maidservant when they contended with him," knowing, in that old Oriental world which was so loftily indifferent to the lives and liberties of men and to the honour of women, "that He who had made him had made them," and One "had fashioned them both in the womb." His words, moreover, had "upholden him that was falling," and he had "strengthened the feeble knees." "When the ear heard him then it blessed him; and when the eye saw him, it gave witness to him."

Job was the noblest, and altogether most admirable character that could be conceived, and that no room might be left for any possible Calvinistic falsehood, God himself is represented as bearing emphatic testimony "that there was none like him upon the earth, a perfect and upright man, who feared God and eschewed evil."

But now calamity after calamity falls upon Job. His cattle, his servants, his sons are taken from him, and, lastly, his bodily health fails.

He is afflicted with a loathsome and painful disease. These sufferings were external. But there are others, keener, in store for him. His wife bids him say, "Farewell to God;" bids him see what is the result of all his piety to God and charity to men, and considering how unjust God is, sink into sceptical despair and die.

Then the three friends, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, draw nigh; men full of genuine piety and true affection, but possessed by their narrow views of God's dealings with man. "And when they lifted up their eyes afar off, and knew him not, they lifted up their voice and wept, and they rent every one his mantle, and sprinkled dust upon their heads towards heaven. So they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spake a word unto him; for they saw that his grief was very great."

What noble tenderness! And yet these very men, with their mistaken views, were to become the instruments of Job's most poignant torments. In the agony of the sufferings of the sorely tried man, hope had died out of his breast. His wife had scoffed at him, "his acquaintance had turned from him." He "had called his servant, and he had given him no

answer." The very children, "whose fathers he would have disdained to set with the dogs of his flock," held him in derision, made him their song, their byword, and, with the brutality of coarse natures, did not "spare to spit in his face." As he tottered on his way, the lads in thoughtless mischief "pushed away his feet."

And now that he meets with real sympathy, Job's sorrow breaks forth into words, into a long piteous cry, in which he pours forth the agony of his soul, and his yearning for death. Why was life given him, if it was to end thus? And sick in mind as in body, he has but one wish,—that he may die. He longs for death, and "it cometh not." He would "dig for it more than for hid treasures."

His friends, with their fixed ideas in their heads, begin their discourses. Eliphaz is the eldest, and he therefore takes the lead. They are shocked at the vehemence of Job, and his ravings are to them confirmation of their prejudices. Job is, there can be no doubt, a bad man. If not a bad man, why is he so afflicted?

Eliphaz opens with a general, vague, impersonal instruction on the ways of Providence.

It is true that Job has been accounted upright, but then, asks Eliphaz, "Is not this the

uprightness of thy ways?"—this misery, this ruin. "Remember, I pray thee, who ever perished, being innocent? or where was the righteous cut off? Even as I have seen, they that plough iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same." His speech is an oblique sermon. He heaps no accusations on the head of Job, but he hints that he is corrupt and wicked. Bildad brings the imputation home. "If *thou* wert pure and upright, surely now God would awake for thee, and make the habitation of thy righteousness prosperous." Job has, indeed, passed among men as God-fearing, just, and humble, but, insinuates Bildad, "the *hypocrite's* hope shall perish; *he* shall lean upon his house, but it shall not stand."

But Job will not hear this version of matters. He knows that he is not a hypocrite, that he has served God up to his light, that he has been just, because his conscience spoke, and he would not act against that sacred inward voice. He knows instinctively that the doctrine of Eliphaz is unsound. His natural conscience revolts against it. "Cannot my taste discern perverse things?" "How forcible are right words! but what doth your arguing prove?" If it be true, which he will not admit, that he is so corrupt

and sinful, then why does God—the preserver of men—not pardon his transgression and take away his iniquity? He takes the teaching of his friends and exhibits it to them in its naked deformity. "If I wash myself with snow water, and make my hands never so clean; yet shalt Thou plunge me in the ditch!" Job can repeat the old commonplaces. He can, indeed, admit that man is not, cannot be, pure as God, but he will not endure to have his errors branded as wilful crimes, and to regard God as a vindictive Being never satisfied till he has blackened man and then burnt him. He will not acknowledge his utter vileness, for he is conscious of the Divine image in him. He will not admit that he is so helpless, for he knows the strength of his conscience and of his will. And yet he is miserable, and knows not why. The ways of Providence are dark. The justice of God is obscured to his eyes. As the strong gusts of passion sweep to and fro across his heart, he appeals to God; he recalls the sayings of his friends; he rejects them, he hesitates, and then he at last bursts into upbraidings of the Power which has become so dreadful an enigma to him. "Thou inquirest after my iniquity, thou searchest after my sin, and thou knowest that I

am not wicked. Why didst thou bring me forth out of the womb? O, that I had given up the ghost, and no eye had seen me. Cease, let me alone. It is but a little while that I have to live."

Up to the end of the first answer to Zophar Job has been passionate, and his friends temperate and collected. But now, shocked at his obstinacy, and disappointed in the result of their homilies, they stray still further from the truth in their attempt to strengthen their position, lose their temper, become violent, and utter a string of false accusations. Their wounded self-love begins to show behind their zeal for God; whilst in contrast to them, as there is less and less truth in what they say, Job grows more and more collected. As the charges are brought personally home to him, the confidence in his own real innocence rises against them. Eliphaz, again, gives the note which the others follow. Hear this Calvinist of the old world. "Thy own mouth condemneth thee, and thine own lips testify against thee. What is man that he should be clean, and he that is born of a woman that he should be righteous? Behold, he putteth no trust in his saints. Yea, the heavens are not clean in his sight; how much

more abominable and filthy is man, which drinketh iniquity like water."

But Job *is* innocent, perfect, righteous. God himself had borne witness to this. His own conscience tells him that he has followed it, in all his dealings. It is Job who is found at last to have spoken truth, and the friends to have sinned in denying it. He knows that God is just, and yet he cannot admit that he has deserved these chastisements. He appeals to God to clear his memory from the imputations cast upon it, and a hope dawns on him of another life in which he may see God, and the riddle of life will be solved, and justice will be done him. With such a hope to comfort his heart, Job renews the contest with his friends. Eliphaz had laid down a general law. Prosperity always attended on the righteous man, and misfortune always befell the ungodly. "I have seen the foolish taking root; but suddenly I cursed his habitation. His children are far from safety, and they are crushed in the gate, neither is there any to deliver them. Whose harvest the hungry eateth up, and taketh it even out of the thorns, and the robber swalloweth up their substance."

This is not true, Job says. I allow that God

is just, that He rewards men after their works, but not in the way that you suppose, and not here in this life.

The world is constituted quite differently from what you suppose. "The *wicked* become old and are mighty in power. *Their* seed is established in their sight with them, and their offspring before their eyes, neither is the rod of God upon them. They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down into the grave." So far from prosperity being an evidence of righteousness, it is an incentive to forgetfulness of God. For it is these prosperous sinners who say to God, "Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways. What is the Almighty that we should serve Him? and what profit should we have if we pray to Him?"*

Nations are, indeed, always punished sooner or later for wrongdoings, in the present world. Their retribution does take place here. But it is not so with individuals. Good men are afflicted in the world—bad men prosper and prevail. Yet God is just. The justice of God

* Our translators have missed the meaning of ch. xxi. 19. They make Job affirm what he has throughout steadfastly denied.

must be maintained; it could not be doubted. But God's justice was not to be maintained by a perverse dogma derogatory to the dignity of man, revolting to his conscience, and paralysing all endeavour after holiness.*

In the 27th chapter the speech of Job ends with the 10th verse; at the 11th begins the speech of Eliphaz, which continues to the 23rd verse.† Some Jewish copyist, angry at the tenor of the book, and the justification of Job, left out the words, "Then said Eliphaz," in order to force Job to admit that which he had

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* "The *adequate* solution cannot be furnished on the ground of the Jewish economy. It is only by the Gospel of Jesus Christ that a certainty of righteous compensation after death is unfolded. *There* is the Christian's comfort. *There* the ways of God towards man are fully indicated. Life and immortality are brought to light by Christianity alone. We need not therefore expect a satisfactory solution from the author of the book. All that can be reasonably looked for is some approach to it—something beyohd the current Mosaism, where all is mystery and darkness."—Davidson's Introd. O.T., ii. 217.

† This is Dr. Kennicott's explanation. He is followed by Eichhorn and Bertholdt. But others suppose this to be an interpolation by a later hand. The structure of the poem demands a speech from Eliphaz, and the restoring these verses to him gives it the unity required,—this is the least violent explanation of a difficulty.

stoutly denied,—ready to sacrifice the sense of the poem rather than see his cherished dogma confuted.

Another instance of this tampering with the text occurs further on. The whole speech of Elihu is an interpolation, and is rejected decisively by Hebrew scholars.

The interpolator has unconsciously confessed the feeling which allowed him to take so great a liberty. He too, possessed with the old Jewish theory, was unable to accept a contradiction to it, and, missing the spirit of the poem, he believed that God's honour could be vindicated by his fraud. "His wrath was kindled" against the friends, because they could not answer Job; and against Job because he would not be answered; and conceiving himself "full of matter," and "ready to burst like new bottles," he could not contain himself, and delivered into the text a sermon on the Theodice, such as formed the current doctrine of the time when he lived.

God appears to Job. He asks Job whether he would reason with the Almighty. He does not show the why and wherefore of His dealings; He reveals His majesty, His wisdom; Job

must trust His justice, and rely on his Creator. But as for those narrow-minded bigots who had constituted themselves pleaders for him, they were all wrong; and Job, the passionate, had spoken the truth; and the friends had to escape death by covering themselves with the mantle of Job's intercession. "My servant Job shall pray for you, and him will I accept. Lest I deal with you after your folly, for ye have not spoken of me the thing which is right, like my servant Job."*

The harsh view of suffering, that God punishes for the sake of punishing, that He smites for the sake of vindicating His justice, that He is one to exact the uttermost farthing in retribution, is utterly condemned in this magnificent poem. Whatever may be the purpose of suffering, it is not that. That view, at least, is false. It is that view of it which hardens the heart, and obstructs pain working its salutary effects. What the true view of suffering is, that the Almighty did not reveal to Job. He showed him His majesty, and bade

* See Renan's "Book of Job;" the *Westminster Review* for October, 1853; and Dr. Davidson's "Introduction to the Old Testament."

him trust and wait. In time the justice and the mercy of His ways would be made manifest. He might discover it in part, but the mystery could not be known till the fulness of time was come, when the key would be placed in the hands of men by the Man of Sorrows, acquainted with grief.

II.

THE OCCASION OF SUFFERING.

GAL. iii. 4.

Have ye suffered so many things in vain?

THE story of the conversion of Raymund Lulli, the philosopher, alchemist, theologian, and, finally, martyr for the faith of Christ, is both romantic and pathetic. The young Majorcan noble, full of the joy and exultation of youth, was known at the Court of Aragon only as a poet and musician. He fell passionately in love with a Countess, young, beautiful, and cheerful, and he composed and sang to her his sweetest lays. But one moonlight night when he was singing with his guitar under her window, she came upon the balcony, and leaning towards him, said in a low sad voice, "You think me happy, and beautiful, and with hope of life—look here!" She drew aside the handkerchief that covered her neck and breast, and he saw that she was consumed by cancer.

And is it not often so with us? Full of the hope and effervescence of youth, we feel a passion of love for Nature, for the Life that teems, and gushes, and buds, and sings, and glows in all creation;—and then, at some time, the veil is drawn aside, and we are shown the wound in the breast, the care corroding the heart of the Nature we worshipped. Then comes the recoil, and at the shock we feel as if the ground were yielding under our feet, our hope were melting away, our faith vanishing, and a dark cloud of despair settles over our landscape.

We look on all sides, and the prevalence of suffering meets us, and oppresses us. We see everywhere the mystery, and are tormented because we cannot solve the problem of its presence.

And what a mystery suffering is—the suffering that everywhere abounds!

That abounds indeed!

We live and move and have our being in suffering. As our mother travailed with us, we caused her discomfort and pain; we were brought into the world with a stifled scream, we purchased our life at the price of our mother's blood.

We are Molochs to whom all creation passes its sons and daughters through the fire. The reaped corn that makes our bread has cost man and beast hard toil. With every grain that is crushed in the mill perishes a generation of yellow corn-ears. Our meat is procured by the sacrifice of happy lives. We deal agony and death to bird and fish and beast, and our dishes are seasoned with their anguish.

You have never, perhaps, killed the meat for your meal. If you had done so, you would have been brought face to face with the great mystery. When bird or animal—the pigeon or the rabbit—is flying in mad terror from your hand, and you catch it, and feel the heart beat wildly against your palm, and hear the cry of pain, and watch the convulsive struggles, and see the delicate mechanism of God's making reduced to wreck—then it forces itself on the mind that somehow the world must be out of joint, if such misery and ruin be needful to furnish man with a dinner.

Life is a battle. Life is a massacre. Life is a torture-chamber. If every nerve we set quivering with our requirements could ring a little bell, we should be deafened with the clangour. It was cruel to put the microscope

into the Brahmin's hand, and show him that with the utmost effort he could not guard himself from daily destruction of life. If he spared the mosquito, and ate only rice, he slew his thousands in every breath of air, and his tens of thousands in every draught of water.

It cannot be otherwise, no doubt. It is a necessity. But because a necessity, it does not cease to be horrible and revolting.

Every living creature murders as well as we, and the brand of Cain is on the brow of all creation ; yet because we share the burden of blood, it does not cease to be oppressive.

No doubt the plant suffers little from the gnawing worm and the gardener's knife ; but it bears its scar or bleeds to death. It does not attain the end for which it was primarily designed, the perfection which was the ideal set before it, and to which it strove, not altogether unconsciously, not altogether blindly ; and therefore must suffer to the extent of its consciousness, in a sense of frustrated aims. Look at the daisy seed through a microscope. You will see in it the sketch of the future plant—like the earnest of immortality in the soul of man. The seed germinates, and its hope promises to become an eventuality. It has its predestined

future before it. It will be a mother in the meadow in whom all generations of the earth will be blessed. Thousands on ten thousands of stars on the greensward will date their pedigree from that little seed. But the hoe turns up the germ, and it is cast upon the dunghill, its ideal unaccomplished, its promise made of none effect. And so it is also with animals.

Look at the thousands of eggs in the herring's roe, each preordained to life and fertility. For a penny you buy and destroy seed that would have filled the waters of a world with shoals. Was that roe made a storehouse of life to perish between your teeth? Was the plaintive dove clothed with soft feathers of tender grey, and given its coral feet and soothing note, to find a grave in a pie-dish, with its scorched feet thrust through the crust?

The whole world is at war. In the struggle for existence every living organism appears on the earth as an Esau, with hand raised against its fellow, as Richard III. armed with teeth to bite and devour. The hedgerow is a battle-field: briony, eglantine, stellaria, bindweed, fern, moss, ground-ivy, crane's-bill, are striving there together for the mastery, dwarfing, strangling, trampling one another out of health and existence.

Among the organs of animals how many are arms offensive and defensive! Geology reveals the incessant nature of this war. The bones of beasts that haunted the earth before man appeared bear the traces of the teeth of their enemies, and reveal to us after the lapse of ages the ferocious conflicts which drenched the young globe with blood.

Life lives by death. We eat the dead. We breathe the dead. The dead flow in our veins —the dead who died with violence and with cries of pain.

In the vast realm of living nature, violence reigns. A sort of madness arms all beings *in mutua funera.* In the vegetable realm the law begins to operate ; from the gigantic catalpa to the lowliest herb, how many plants die, and how many are killed! But when we enter the animal world, this law all at once receives prodigious expansion. In every grand division of the animal species there exist a certain number of animals charged with the passion for devouring one another. There are predatory insects, predatory reptiles, predatory fishes, predatory birds, and predatory quadrupeds. There does not elapse a moment of time during which some living being is not falling a victim to some

other. From the whole circle of the world, from under the frozen breastplate of the polar seas, from the warm teeming bosom of the tropical earth, goes forth an unending moan of pain, here dumb sobs, there piercing shrieks.

Man kills to nourish his life, he kills to clothe his body, he kills for his adornment; he kills for his instruction, he kills for his amusement, he kills for the pleasure of killing.* The more beautiful the life, the more eagerly it is crushed out. The dazzling blue beetle must be suffocated in laurel leaves to yield its scales for a brooch, the humming-bird must give up its airy dance about the lianis bells to be wired into a bonnet. The child beats down the peacock butterfly, the diver tears open the pearl oyster. The worm is choked for his silken cocoon, the sponge is wrenched from the rock for its skeleton.

And mankind is, like the rest of animal nature, at war with every creature, and society reveals a rivalry, a battle, as there is battle and rivalry in the hedgerow among the plants.

> Alas, poor Earth,
> Almost afraid to know itself! It cannot
> Be call'd our Mother, but our grave: where nothing
> But who knows nothing, is once seen to smile;

* Cf. De Maîstre, Soirées de St. Petersbourg.

Where sighs and groans, and shrieks that rend the air
Are made, not mark'd ; where violent sorrow seems
A modern ecstasy ; the dead man's knell
Is there scarce ask'd for Who ; and good men's lives
Expire before the flower in their caps
Dying, or ere they sicken.*

It may be said, indeed it is said, that misery and death must inevitably prevail in the world, that pain is salutary, suffering remedial. I do not deny it ; in subsequent lectures I shall show that they are all this and more—that they are Nature's signals warning creatures off that which is dangerous to their welfare, that they are veiled angels ministering to the general happiness.

It may be true, it is true, that the nerve formed for receiving sensations of pleasure must be also susceptible to sensations of pain ; that fibres which dance to music must quiver at discords ; the eye that drinks in light and laughs at colour must dazzle or darken ; that the multiplication of beings on the world's surface exacts the death of their progenitors.

But suffering and death are only inevitable in the world as now constituted—which is to state a truism.

Suffering may be necessary, and the maxim

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* Macbeth, act iv. sc. 3.

that the end justifies the means, which must be rigidly excluded from the domain of morals, may perhaps have its legitimate application in the sphere of creation.

But, after all that can be said by the apologists for suffering, that it is educative, that it is remedial, that it is purificative, that it is expiatory,—it remains a fact that it is only so, because there exists disorder in the system, error which must be corrected, evil that must be remedied, blemishes that must be washed away, sins that must be expiated,—it is only because of this that pain exists.

Pain is not the nourishment of perfect life, but the medicine for maimed existence. In a state of health we need it not. Death is not a creative force, but creative force arrested and turned aside. Pain ceases when the disorder is at an end. When obstructions accumulate and divert the river of the water of life from its chosen channel, death supervenes. Pain and death are, then, evils; not necessary evils, for it is quite possible to imagine a world from which they are eliminated.

Nature, as we see every day, compensates for loss, for frustrated purposes.

If the rabbit has many enemies, it is the

most prolific of mothers; if the grains of wheat are crushed for food, each stalk bears half a hundred seeds.

Like Jordan, "which overflows her banks all the time of harvest," Nature is lavish, is exuberant in her fecundity, to make up for the blighted futures of so many myriads of her offspring. Her book of accounts is nicely balanced, and Necessity is the auditor.

The world, from the first manifestation of life upon it, received the stamp of death. Death fatally ruled the conditions of the nascent life. The pillar of fire that illumined the way through the wilderness cast its shadow also athwart the waste. The breath that passed over chaos was at once hot and cold. It quickened into being, and it smote into nothingness.

It could not be otherwise. Beside the Creator stood the phantom of Death. Why? We shall come to that presently. Suffice now that it was so. Death conditioned Life from the outset, from the waking from not-being into existence in the first diatom that swam in the lukewarm primal sea. Because it must die, therefore it must become a parent. The command impressed on all organic nature, Be

fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth, bore as its corollary, For that all must die.

If productiveness were conceivable without death to check the increase, the world would overteem. A limited surface with unlimited development of life upon it could not be. It would be an absolute impossibility. But the world peopled by a finite number of living beings, plants and insects, beasts and birds, as it is composed of a finite number of inorganic substances which neither marry nor are given in marriage—such a world is quite conceivable. And in such a world there would be no death. And if no death, then no pain, for pain would have lost its *ratio vivendi.*

Long before man was created—but not before he was foreseen—Death had set up his throne upon the globe, and his arrows went abroad to seek the smallest heart, or rudiment of a heart, in all creation, in which to rankle till it slew.

Long before man was created, long before he fell, pain, evil were in the world—for pain is evil. Mountains were massed of the skeletons of generations before Adam tasted of the tree of death. The megatherium and the icthyosaurus rose up and slew their brothers before

Cain lifted his hand against Abel. The foes of every creature were of his own household before Lamech smote his firstborn.

Nothing is more certainly proved to us by the chronicles of Creation preserved to us in stony tablets, than that the fall of man did not produce any change in the order, in the aspect of Nature.

When the first spark of spiritual life—the first communication of the Divine nature—entered into the animal soul of man, from that moment a dualism of interest, an opposition of tendencies, was established in his being. He had two centres, the physical and the immaterial, the animal and the spiritual, around which to rotate; his life could no longer run in a circular orbit of natural sequences, without disturbing influences; like the moon, his centre of gravity was displaced. When in the midst of a sensual life the spirit trembles, and the conscience aches, then the Divine pole of man's being is making its attraction felt. When in the luminous orbit of spiritual existence imperious passions drag at the soul, then the animal centre of man's being is putting forth its energy.

From the moment that man was given a

soul looking into heavenly regions, from the moment that a dualism was established in his nature, a Free Will became his inevitable prerogative to determine the inclination of the scales of his being. He was no more fatally ruled by the necessities of animal existence; he had the choice put into his hand between two lives, between two masters; he must hate the one and love the other, or else hold to the one and despise the other,—or spend his life in hovering hesitatingly about both, constrained by each, enjoying neither.

Man has a nature compounded of the angel and the beast, subordinate the one to the other—

There is a heat setting the heart aglow,
Where the Bird broodeth;
There is a light which through the mind doth flow,
Where no base thing intrudeth;
There is a fluttering
Of wishes on the wing,
That doth the heart uplift, the mind expand,
With sense of power and lofty aspiration.

There is a heat which through the blood doth flow,
Where the Beast lurketh;
A light there is which wandereth to and fro,
Casting a lurid intermittent glow
Around, that worketh
To the mind's eye uncomely things to show,—
Things that 'tis death to love, and bitter shame to know.*

* "Aurora," p. 60. King & Co.

Man, given a supernatural light and life, has, necessarily, to make choice between his masters whom he will serve, to elect his centre round which he will make his orbit. And having this freedom of choice, the possibility of a fall resulted inevitably from the dualism established in his system. If the power of choosing awrong were not his, he would have no free will; if no free will, no dualism in his nature; if no dualism, then he must be all angel or all animal.

Eden is not a thing of the past only. Every child's heart is the Garden of Paradise, in which stand the trees of Life and of Death, the spiritual and the material, the angelic and the brutish, and every child has to make his election by the necessity of his constitution. The Fall is renewed in every son of Adam who inclines to the animal instead of to the spiritual.

The fact, then, of man obtaining a spiritual nature established the dualism in his being, this dualism necessitated Free Will, this Free Will rendered a Fall possible, and the Fall being a possibility, the Creator was obliged to condition the world for such a contingency.

God did not make the nerve to thrill with pain. He designed it to leap with pleasure, but because of the introduction of the Spirit

into man, the crown of Creation, because man in the exercise of the freedom of his will might fall, pain became a requisite.

If man had been but an animal, nobler in kind than his fellow-mammals, without the divine gift, then there need not have been pain and death introduced into the economy of nature, for he would have run his course with the animals, a painless, perhaps varying, but a deathless course, like the inorganic substances. He might have entered into countless combinations, undergone endless transformations, as oxygen combines with other substances ; but such combinations would have been sterile, and such transformations would have been unproductive. Pleasurable these unions, these changes might have been, harmless certainly ; they would neither have impaired the substance nor destroyed the individuality of any being.

There would have been a given number of men, as there are a given number of atoms of sodium, in the world. As it was at the beginning so it would be at the end, there would be the same number without diminution and without increase.

But the world was not created for men of this stamp—men who would be but exalted

apes—but for men with the divine gift of idealism in their souls.

And therefore it was of necessity that the world should be constituted from the beginning with the contingent prospect of the Fall, and provision made for its redress.

And now I think we can see, if only dimly, yet somewhat, through the veil of mystery which involves the origin of pain. Pain is the result of evil, but evil is only possible because man is exalted so high, made partaker of the Divine Nature.

The heavenly spark that was given to mankind cast him chained upon the rock. The heathen saw that, and made it the subject of the greatest tragedy ever produced. Man endowed with the heavenly flame, the flash of soul in the dark chamber of his consciousness, was thereby doomed to suffer. So the heathen poet described him. He had tasted of the tree and must therefore die, the sword must pierce through the soul that gave birth to Thought. The chains of hard necessity must bind him who has breathed the air of Freedom. Pegasus winged must draw the plough. Genius must suffer martyrdom. The soul must be smothered by carnal cares. There is no redress, no escape, no hope. Man with a

living, hungering, heaven-climbing soul, with a soul endowed potentially with divine omnipotence, omniscience, and only a little span of life in which it may expand,—this to the heathen's eye was an anomaly.

"Lofty-scheming son of Themis, unwilling I rivet thee, unwilling, in indissoluble shackles on this lonely crag, where, slowly scorched by the glaring sun, thou shalt lose the bloom of thy face, and night in her spangled robe shall veil the light from thee; and the sun again shall disperse the hoar-frost of the morning; and *evermore shall the pain of the present evil waste thee; for no one yet born shall release thee.*"*

But how different is the condition of man as seen by the Christian! The shackles are *not* indissoluble. One has come to preach deliverance to the captives. The crag is *not* so lonely, for One is at his side whose form is that of the Son of God. The pain of the present evil shall *not* waste for evermore, for *One is born* who shall give release. The lot of man is not hopeless. "Behold," says the Christian seer,

* Æschylus, "Prometheus Bound."

"the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."

III.

THE CAPACITY FOR SUFFERING.

1 PETER v. 10.

But the God of all grace, after ye have suffered a while, make you perfect.

IN my last lecture I showed why it was that pain found a place in God's Creation, —that it was necessitated by the Fall acting retrospectively as well as prospectively, conditioning the world from the laying of its first foundations.

Because man is double in his nature, because he is therefore capable of falling, therefore it is that pain became necessary as a signal bell floating over a rock or shoal in the sailing course of the creature.

Pain in the Order of Justice is a punishment, in the Order of Mercy is a preventive. We shall see this better by-and-by. To-day I must speak of something else—of the capacity for suffering, and what it marks. And I say

that it is a high privilege to have capacity for suffering keenly, whether in the body, or in the intellect, or in the soul.

I think my last lecture led to the threshold of this solemn truth, and must have brought you to suspect it.

The most momentous gift made to man was the Divine Soul. Only less momentous was the gift of Reason. Each gift entails a responsibility, and with each responsibility lies a capacity for receiving pleasure of a high order in the right exercise of the gift, and exquisite pain in the wrong exercise of the gift.

Every gift of God opens a sphere of happiness. The gift of life facultates the enjoyment of life. The amœba lives, a drop of crystal jelly, and tastes in a dim elementary way the pleasure of existence in the running brook, attached to the green watercress.

With the gift of sensation rises the dawn of a new day on animate nature. The first nerve is laid—the keel of a new life to be launched in the ocean of being—and it tingles with pleasure. The finger of God traces a circle in the scarce-conscious mass of jelly, and it laughs into vibratory fibres, and dances on the summer sea.

The nerves are knotted together, and a little bundle opens communications with the outer world, athwart a coat thinned to a transparent film, and through the eye the whole body is filled with light, and casts aside its weeds. Another wire of communication is laid, and the ear is conscious of sound. Finally, touch, and taste, and sight, and smell, and hearing, fill the little creature with such an influx of sensations, that the full life breaks into vocal utterance, into an inarticulate Te Deum.

Every gift of God opens a door for pleasure to enter, but with each is unclosed simultaneously a way by which pain may force its passage. The Valley of Achor is a door of hope and a monument of doom. The savour of life has also in it the savour of death.

It need not have been so, had man not been given a soul—I urge this again—but as the world was constituted, its economy ordained, for man with a free will, with contingency of a Fall, it could not be otherwise.

Opposite to each pleasure stands a pain. The brighter the light, the deeper the shadow it casts. Each faculty of enjoyment is also a faculty of suffering. So ever

Ripe to steam and stain,
Foams round the feet of pleasure
The blood-red must of pain.*

As the creatures of God advance, in every stage of progress rises the standard of sensitiveness to pleasure and to pain.

Let us cast a hasty glance over the development of the nervous system.

There is an essential difference between the structure of the plant and of the animal. In regard to the absorption of aliment, and its circulation through the system, there is little essential difference. In regard to respiration again the systems are essentially alike, though, at least in the higher tribes of animals, there is a complex apparatus of muscle which is wholly absent from the plant; for, in both plant and animal, it is the conversion of alimentary materials into living organised tissue. But the ultimate purpose of this tissue is far from being the same in the two kingdoms. Nearly all the nourishment imbibed by plants is expended in building up their own fabric of stalk and leaf and flower. There is little waste, or decay, of structure in them. But the case is widely dif-

* Swinburne, "Rococo."

ferent in regard to animals. With the exception of those inert tribes whose mode of life is vegetative, we find that the whole structure is formed for motion, and that every act of motion involves a waste or decay of the fabric which executes it. Thus we may say, that whilst the ultimate object of vegetable life is to build up a fabric of organised structure, the highest purpose of organic life in animals is to construct and maintain its mechanism, which is to serve as the instrument of the functions of animal life, enabling them to receive sensations, and to execute spontaneous movements.

This mechanism consists of two kinds of structure—the nervous and the muscular.

The nervous system is that by which the mind is brought into contact with the outer world in which the animal is required to move. From a central terminus radiate a number of channels of communications with the exterior world. Waves of light beat upon the surface of the plant and are transformed on the surface, but they pass through the eye of the animals, and the tide runs up the nervous estuaries, till it reaches and registers itself in the mind. Vibrations of sound touch the flower and the tender petals tremble, and the pollen is

dusted from the pistil, but in the animal they set the auditory fibres in motion and communicate informations to the sensorium.

Touch and taste produce analogous effects: only in their case it is by bodies being brought into immediate contact with the nerve-end. The nervous system is the actual instrument of the mind, which feeds it with impressions, and supplies it with material for thought. A celebrated school of philosophy, hastily generalising from this fact, laid down that there can be nothing in the intellect which has not been admitted to it through the five porches of the senses. "Nihil est in intellectu quod non prius fuerit in sensu."*

By means of the nervous system the individual is brought *en rapport* with the exterior world, and that world excites within him thoughts, emotions, desires, reasonings, determinations. The mind thus instructed and stimulated sets the muscular apparatus in motion, and transforms its impressions into acts.

The nerve has telegraphed, the will has resolved, the muscle performs.

In the lowest type of animal organisation,

* Leibnitz.

the vegetative prevails over the animal life. Movements are not dissimilar in kind to those we witness in plants, and yet this species claims a position in the upper house by virtue of its possession of a little grey knot with a white fibre depending from it,—its patent of nobility, the first sketch of that nervous system which is to pass in other types through such a magnificent procession of evolutions.

In proportion as we trace up the animal scale, the greater complexity of structure do we observe in the nervous system, and the higher become the functions it executes in vertebrated animals ; and, more especially in man, it is evidently that portion of the organism to which everything is brought into subordination. It is so, only because parallel with its development runs the growth of mind. The greater the accentuation of the consciousness, the greater the elaboration of nervous tissue. The greater in importance the metropolis, the more numerous and organised the converging lines to it.

Now the pleasure felt by the animal in the lowest walk of life is the mere pleasure of having vitality, and has little consciousness in it ; and the pain it feels when its elementary

nerve is wounded is correspondingly slight. The perceptive power, whether of pleasure or of pain, grows with the consciousness of the creature. The least conscious laughs least, and also weeps least. The most conscious is most sensitive to influences pleasurable or the reverse. So that the measure of its sensitiveness is the measure of its development.

When we come to man we find that the same law holds good.*

What distinguishes man from the animal is the expansion in him of intellectual power for two purposes; one to supply him with artificial means of subsistence, of which he is naturally destitute—to enable him to make clothing and kill game and kindle a fire; and the other, the chief, for piercing through nature to its laws, for analysing and synthesising in the pursuit of the beautiful and the true.

By this he is endowed with a faculty of living in a world of ideas, of undergoing processes of reasoning, and—most blessed of all—of ideal-

* So-called "sensitiveness" in man is by no means a measure of refinement and elevation. Sensitiveness to affronts is a measure of conceit, not of elevation. Tact, not touchiness, is a truer characteristic of real refinement.

ising. Most blessed, I say, for idealisation is a ray of creative power.

The impressions conveyed by the nerves to the sensorium of the animal have but one effect—to guide it to the accomplishment of the functions of its animal career. There are others whose minds operate for no other end. The inferior types of humanity have a low nervous structure, and with it stand on a low mental level. They have few pleasures which they do not share with the brutes, and also few individualising pains.

The negro, unassisted, nowhere rises to anything noble. Through all the ages that the world has rolled since the first woolly pate appeared on the most ancient of continents, it has never been able to idealise, never to reason beyond the rule of thumb; it has never dreamed of a Paradise, or mused over Creation. Having outrun the ourang by half a stride, the negro has sat down in bland self-complacency. He has no intellectual joys, and no intellectual sorrows, no mental satisfaction, for no mental craving. His ideal of beauty in the days of the first Pharaohs was woman fatted on milk till she could not walk, and of personal adornment

—a cap of cowries ;* and to these ideals he has clung whilst civilisations the most varied have risen in succession, nations that existed not have come to the forefront in march of culture, and in turn have made way for others. The ideal negress sucked milk all day long through a reed, and the negro threaded shells on his hair, whilst at his side the successive waves of Egyptian art and science rose and fell. He learned nothing from the grove of pillars on Philæ, was not urged to consider eternity by the solemn Ritual of the Dead.

The ideal negress sucked, and the negro threaded, whilst the Chaldean on the plain between the rivers watched and registered the motions of the stars and calculated eclipses, whilst he classified plants and grammatised language, and sculptured on alabaster the victories of his kings and the fables of his gods.

That civilisation sank into the earth, and was marked by mighty grave-mounds.

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* The sculptures of El-Assassif represent one of these fat women just as described by Grant and Speke in our days. These sculptures are of the reign of Queen Hashepsu, in the 17th century before the Christian era. See Dümicken, "Die Flotte einer Ægypt, Königin."

The ideal negress still sucked milk, and the negro admired his cowries, when Phidias carved the glorious groups of the Parthenon, and Plato strove through mists to see the face of God. And when Greek civilisation was no more, surviving only in a few MSS. and a few broken statues scattered over Europe,—from where there had been forest and moor, hunted over by barbarians,—there rose a civilisation, these very barbarians formed a new world of art and philosophy. Steinbach reared that dream of beauty, the west front of Strassburg; and Dürer etched and Kraft chiselled; and Kant and Hegel thought out the laws of thought and of being; and a Paradise of song rose under the touch of Handel, and Mozart, and Beethoven.

While the European spirit has achieved such ideals as the Madonna of Raphael and the angels of Da Fiesole, the negro has set no other type of beauty before his mind than obesity; while the European has measured and weighed and discovered the constituents of the stars, and traced the courses of the planets, the negro has remained unobservant of the fact that planets are different from fixed stars.

But even in the very midst and heart of civilisation there are inert beings clinging to it, and moving with it stupidly and unconsciously, as the fly moves with the carriage on which it has alighted, as the twig or leaf is swept down the stream, incapable of affecting its course, and indifferent whither it is borne. There are waste tracts of dull stolidity, souls like larkless fields lying under fog with nothing spiring, singing* above them ; men whose highest happiness is found in a booze of bad ale, and whose lowest misery is a drunken headache.

In the midst of the banquet of culture clowns delight to pasture on what wise men reject as garbage.

The intellectual world ! How many are the divisions, the ranks, the orders, in which it has its workers ! What a glorious world, into which some can enter and others only peep ! What gold of gladness, what sunshine of felicity it affords ! How exhaustless are its treasures !

Take but one faculty as an instance—the

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* "Spiral lark-music in the blue sky drowned." Alfred Austin : *Madonna's Child.*

artistic, idealising faculty. To him who has this, "splendours of nature are revealed to vulgar sights invisible, and beauties manifest in forms, colours, shadows of common objects, where most of the world sees only what is dull and gross and familiar. One reads in the magic story-books of a charm, or a flower, which the wizard gives, and which enables the bearer to see fairies. O! enchanting boon of Nature, which reveals to the possessor the hidden spirits of beauty round about him—spirits which the strongest and most gifted natures compel into painting or song."

One goes from Dan to Beersheba and says, "It is all barren;" and another has seen heaven and angels on the way, yellow tracts of sunlit sand, and faint blue shadows fleeting over it, glittering quartz crystals shooting lightnings, white houses, and beyond, the dark sea twinkling with its myriad dimples.

There are thoughts in the human mind which sing, and weep, and speak, but so low that none without can hear them. As in the open firmament, so in the heaven within, there are cloud-shapes which stand, and fly, and mount, and melt together, and only momentarily have shape and being; and who knows how the forms

without and the forms within intermingle and transform ?*

Do you remember Thackeray's description of poor J. J. Ridley listening to the playing of little Miss Cann ? I must quote it. It traces with a tender brush the idealistic faculty, and the transport it affords :—"Old and weazened as the piano is, feeble and cracked as is her voice, it is wonderful what a pleasant concert she can give in that parlour . . . to a lad who listens with all his soul, with tears sometimes in his great eyes, with crowding fancies filling and throbbing at his heart, as the artist plies her humble instrument. She plays old music of Handel and Haydn, and the little chamber anon swells into a cathedral, and he who listens beholds altars lighted, priests ministering, fair children swinging censers, great oriel windows gleaming in sunset, and seen through arched columns and avenues of twilight marble. As she plays 'Don Juan,' Zerlina comes tripping

* "Wie draussen im weitem Raume, so standen und jagten, stiegen und zerflossen auch in der Seele des Kindes allerlei Wolkenbilder unfasslich, und nur vom Augenblick Dasein und Gestalt empfangend. Wer aber weiss wie die Wolkenbilder draussen in der Weite und im engen Herzens-raum zerfliessen und sich wandeln ?" Auerbach Barfüssele, p. 58.

over the meadows, and Masetto after her, with a crowd of peasants and maidens; and they sing the sweetest of all music, and the heart beats with happiness, and kindness, and pleasure. Piano, pianissimo! the city is hushed. The towers of the great cathedral rise in the distance, its spires lighted by the broad moon. The statues in the moonlit place cast long shadows athwart the pavement; and the fountain in the midst is dressed, like Cinderella, for the night, and sings, and wears a crest of diamonds. That great sombre street all in shade—can it be the famous Toledo? or is it the Corso? or is it the great street in Madrid, the one which leads to the Escurial, where the Rubens and the Velasquez are? It is Fancy Street, Poetry Street, Imagination Street. . . All these delights, sights, and joys, and glories, these thrills of sympathy, movements of unknown longing, and visions of beauty, a young sickly lad of eighteen enjoys in a little dark room, where there is a bed disguised in the shape of a wardrobe, and a little old woman is playing under a gaslamp on the jingling keys of an old piano."*

* "The Newcomes," cxi.

I have taken but the idealistic, the poetic, the artistic, sense in man, but I might as well have taken the rational faculty, and spoken of the delight it feels in the exact, or the inductive, sciences.

In this intellectual world the mind that has its joys has also its sorrows; and if it be a privilege to be able to drink of these joys, it is bought at the price of tasting sharp and bitter pains.

The pearl that grows in the mussel is the fruit of sickness. A pain, a wasting away of the creature lent to the tiny moon its substance and its silver. But, O, rather be a pearl-mussel with a jewel in the heart, however much it makes that heart to ache, than to be a mussel rude in health, with nothing in it but a mouthful of weed.

The cause of suffering to the mind is privation of nutriment, or the unwholesomeness of the nutriment it is required to assimilate—ignorance or error. Ignorance is armed with a spur, and error holds a scourge. The spur of ignorance should stimulate to action, the whip of error guide aright. The mind suffers from hunger or from indigestion—if hungry it must eat, if pained by dyspepsia it must choose

its food more carefully. If the mind has no appetite, the mind has probably ceased to be. A healthy mind is active and intolerant of error. There are two sorts of minds, those creative and receptive, geniuses and intelligences—minds that are full of spontaneity, and minds that will accept, but originate nothing, fountains and pitchers, lamps and reflectors.

Here let me say a word on the subject of the higher education of women. If we contrast the best German works of fiction with those of a like standard in England, we find that they represent struggles of a distinct order, and reflect, no doubt, distinct movements in German and English social life. In the English novel—I mean of the best class—we have the moral struggle depicted, the heroine striving against difficulties that beset her career in following her ideal of womanhood. And almost perfect is that ideal in its exquisite polish, purity, goodness, and delicacy. In the English story the interest turns on the moral development of the heroine, in the German we see the struggles of a mind battling for emancipation from pettiness.* The order of pains

* I need but refer as an instance to "Das Geheimniss der alten Mamsell."

in each type is different: in the English novel the moral sense suffers, and grows to a harvest; in the German "Roman" it is the mental life that craves and cries out, and will not be satisfied with anything short of full intellectual culture.

But, on the other hand, there is a roughness and want of refinement, startling to English taste, as revealed by the same German works of fiction. The perfect woman in Germany has not the exquisite delicacy and tact of the English lady; as the English woman wants the mental culture of the German.

Our education of woman is incomplete. She possesses naturally fancy and sensitiveness, and we direct our efforts to sublimate these qualities. She is naturally defective in exactness and reason, and we do not attempt to educate those faculties which are feeblest in her. A course of Euclid is useful for man, it is essential to woman.

We see in our village schools, every day, minds which cannot be awakened into interest in anything intellectual. They have no power of flying in the open firmament of heaven. They must hug the earth, and crawl in the mud. The world of ideas will never unfold

to them. But there are others which can be lifted, though they will never lift themselves, and the object of education is to stimulate the sluggish faculty in these natures, till thought becomes a habit, and, as a habit, may adhere.

But there are many educated persons who never make any intellectual progress. This is a common failing of the English country parson. Like Joe in "Pickwick," their minds are always dropping into naps unless pinched or prodded into activity. They are always behind the times in their theology, their politics, their science, their general reading, for they never advance beyond the date when they took their degree. Some chickens chip a hole in their shells and protrude their heads, and die without shaking themselves clear of their case; and certain minds do the same. Some who have been brought to the threshold of a liberal education leave their cards on Σοφία after a first introduction, but with a P.P.C. in the corner.

In the vast Virginian caverns, some two centuries ago, a colony of rats took up their abode, and there bred and multiplied. No ray of light enters these dreary vaults, and the descendants

of the first intruders, having never used their eyes, and feeling no necessity for using them, have lost them. The eyes are absorbed, and exist only in trace. If man, given an intellect, does not exercise it, it is reabsorbed like the eyes of these rats.

The stomach of a man long kept without food will reject all food save broth, and some men and women bring their minds to such a condition of exhaustion, that they can only fancy and digest slops.

I return to the point whence I have digressed.

The capacity for intellectual enjoyment marks its presence by the pain it feels when deprived of proper nourishment. The suffering the mind endures when insufficiently or unsuitably fed, registers the quality of the mind, and its position in the scale.

Of spiritual suffering I shall speak in another lecture.

IV.

SUFFERING EDUCATIVE.

HEB. xii. 11.

No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit.

PAIN has got one very marked and unmistakable function to perform in the economy of nature:—it is a protection to the creature. Although in itself evil, it is a means of good. It hedges the path on both sides, keeping life in the course toward the end for which it was designed.

In the world of mere matter there is no pleasure and no pain, because there is no consciousness, no freedom, and no will. The particles of matter act fatally, in dumb subserviency to an irresistible law. They cannot transgress, they can only obey. Their destiny is their dynamic impulse.

But in the animal there exists a certain amount of freedom, and volition, and conscious-

ness, and therefore pleasure and pain take their places on either side, as the pedagogues of the new life. The animal has a certain office to fulfil in the world, a certain obligation is laid upon it, and this obligation is the governing motive of its life. But whereas in the inorganic substance the law acts from without immediately, in the animal the law is seated within, and acts mediately. The stone will lie unmoved throughout eternity, unless force be applied to dislodge it. But the smallest plant had motive force in its own organism. The tiniest insect has in its breast what is denied to the mightiest mountain. The creature is given a will, and a will to fulfil its mission; and pain and pleasure are its instructors to teach it how this mission is to be fulfilled.

Pleasure supplies it with incentives to do that which is in accordance with its nature, and pain with dissuasives from venturing on that which is opposed to its constitution.

The power of *will* is but partial, and varies in intensity in the various stages of life, but it exists in all that have sensation.

As a general rule, pain follows the non-fulfilment of the natural conditions of life, and pleasure accompanies the fulfilment of these con-

ditions. The world contains substances that are harmful, and others that are helpful, and the animal frame is susceptible to pain in the use of those that are harmful, and of delight from the use of the helpful; and through these sensations the will of the creature is supplied with effective motives for its direction.

"A young rabbit heedlessly running through briers tears his tender skin, and smarts, and so avoids this rending of his coat. If the pain did not warn him, he would tear his skin to pieces, and lose his life in seeking to save it. A dog running over sharp stones would soon wear out his feet; the pain warns him of the peril before it is too late. If he were to lose a limb he must go limp and lame all his life, for another leg will not shoot out to take the place of the one he has wasted and used up. The suffering makes him careful; he keeps his feet, and goes four-legged all his days.

"The lobster and the crab have a thick and nearly insensible shell, for protection against ravenous enemies; but such is the nature of their covering, that their limbs are brittle and easily rent off, another soon taking the place of that which is lost. The animal suffers but little pain from that injury. With him it is no great

hardship to lose a limb which is so easily supplied anew. But the lobster cannot bear any great change of temperature, such is his constitution ; it would destroy his life. So his shell is a good conductor of heat, and he is keenly sensitive to the alternations of heat and cold. This sensitiveness, and the pain it brings, if he goes out of his proper temperature, keep him always in such places as suit his organisation, in a temperature congenial to his nature, in waters which also supply his food. The dog can bear a great change of temperature, clad in his non-conducting coat, which also accommodates itself to the changes of climate. Variations of heat and cold are not painful to him. The dog's sensitiveness of touch, and the lobster's sensitiveness to heat and cold, bring pain to both ; but the suffering keeps the lobster in his place, and preserves the limbs of the dog safe and sound. Give the dog the lobster's insensibility to pain from the sense of touch, he would run, or fight, till he wore his legs off his body ; give the lobster the dog's sensitiveness to this form of pain, and living as he does in the ceaseless wash of the waters, with brittle limbs, his life would be a torment while it lasted, and in torment would it soon end.

Give the dog the lobster's sensitiveness to heat and cold, he would be miserable most of the time and soon die; give the lobster the dog's indifference to temperature, the currents of the sea would soon sweep him away from his food, from his natural position, and he and his race would speedily perish. The pain of both is only adequate to keep each in his proper place: it is the tether by which they are bound out and kept from harm."*

Pain and pleasure provoke corresponding sensations in the mind of the animal which conduce to its education. The experience of pain living in its recollection warns it off again attempting that which has once caused it suffering. The experience of pleasure incites it to renew its experience. Fear and desire are the emotions of the mind created by experience.

Fear is the presentiment of pain, and desire is the presentiment of pleasure. In the life of the animal the sensations of suffering, nervous or mental, hold a lesser place than those which are pleasurable. Nature would have failed in her object if she had imposed on the creatures whose happiness she sought a constraint which

* Theodore Parker's Works, xi. p. 198.

poisoned their joys. When we consider the number of individuals composing a species, the medium duration of their lives, the means of defence at their disposal, and the variable natures of their needs and appetites, we feel as if we could reduce to a mathematical calculation the balance of their joys and pains, and assure ourselves that the former vastly outweigh the latter, and that pain is reduced to play no more extended part than that of a useful stimulant to the activity of body and mind.

The dangers that menace animals are limited, and there are few they do not know how to evade. They know what are their enemies, and are specially provided with means for escaping them; and their instinct teaches them to avoid the instinctive artifices adopted by others for their destruction.

If, now, we consider man in the first days of our geologic period, we find him surrounded by terrifying forces which he does not understand, and cannot control. Where the beast sees nothing, he suspects a mystery. The course of the bird—of the darting swallow and the soaring lark—is direct. But man's step is hesitating, his course wavering. The brute is guided by instinct, the co-ordination and transmission

of past experiences. But instinct fails man almost entirely. He grasps at it, and finds it not. In him the chain attaching him to the past gives way under his fingers. That which exists in its plenitude in the brute is reduced to a rudiment in him. But in its place he acquires the new gift of intelligence, a coin stamped with the Creator's image,—but it is a coin which he turns in his hands, and of which he does not guess the value.

He starts on his career from almost absolute ignorance, cast down by fear of the unknown. And to him, new upon the earth, everything is terrible, for everything is a mystery.

How long, and under how many forms, this iron yoke of fear weighed on mankind! And yet he bore it for his good. Physically matched with the beasts of the field, he was their inferior; he was of all the most helpless; he had not the agility of the wild cat to seize on food; he had not its natural weapons; he had not even its coat of fur. Pain and fear goaded his intelligence into activity, and forced him to discover means of subsistence; and he fashioned rude flint weapons to kill the game that was to serve him both for food and for clothing.

But pain and fear did more than this. The

most natural means of preservation—that which even animals instinctively discover—is for the individual to oppose dangers by associating himself with others of the same species. Resistance is facilitated by combination of efforts. When the individual finds his own powers an insufficient guarantee for his conservation, the complement is supplied by the aid of his fellows; and soon he finds himself one of a bundle, a member of a community; he receives, and he also gives.

Fear and pain have driven him from isolation into social life. They have laid the first cornerstone of the family, the tribe, the city, the nation—of social and political economy. I need not pursue the development of the human race, and show how a want—which is a pain in bud—has led to each advance in civilisation; how catastrophes have formed the social and political conscience, just as misfortunes moulded the instinct in animals; how bitter experience has begot wisdom in spite of every obstacle which prejudice or superstition has thrown in its way.

It is not patience—at least in the development of civilisation—that works experience, and experience hope of amendment, that needeth

not to be ashamed, but it is *im*patience of disaster, a temper that will not sit down under misfortune, but makes efforts to control it. There are nations, as there are individuals, which, when the question is put, Where shall wisdom be found, and where is the place of understanding? may truthfully answer, with the depth and with the sea, "It is not in me." But such nations must sink, and such individuals must fall. They may be wiped out, but they cannot be polished up.

They have either no faculty for learning by experience, or that faculty is strangled by superstition.

The limit of intelligence is the starting-point of prejudice. It is the ass, and not the horse, that lies down when a stimulus is applied.

Too often it is found that an erroneous view of the relations in which God stands to His creatures is the barrier to progress. I should rather say a false view of the character of the Almighty Himself. The primeval savage, when first he formed a notion of the Deity, conceived Him as a mighty being who smote about Him in wanton caprice. And too much of this misconception survives.

The Wahabee relates that God framed man-

kind of a lump of clay, and He cast one part of the lump into Heaven, and said, "These go to bliss, and what care I?" and flung the other portion into Hell, and said, "And these to woe, and what care I?"

The Mahomedan reckons on God's relation to the world as in accord with this fable. Allah rules it arbitrarily. His mercies drop where least deserved. His judgments fall with freakish indifference. The welfare of man, the prosperity of nations, depend on the shuffle of the lots, and not on industry and forethought.

Some religions bewilder, but this petrifies.

Some destroy as the sepia, by involving the victims in a cloud, but this, as the electric eel, by paralysis.

The Calvinistic theory of God's dealing with man is scarcely less pernicious. According to it God is the grand executioner, not the loving Father, of mankind. He scourges for the sake of punishing, not for the sake of amending. The Calvinist views man as vile and worthless, unable to think aright, to learn what is right, to act aright, deserving a lash at his back all the days of his life on earth, and damnation through all eternity. The misfortunes that befall him are all retributive. Every trouble is

a thimbleful out of the ocean of wrath which is swelling to submerge him. Lightning falls, not to restore natural equilibrium, but to blast the ungodly. The cholera rages not because the drains have contaminated the wells, but because of the spread of infidelity. The potatoes are blighted because excursion trains run on the Sabbath. As everybody knows, Tenterden steeple occasioned Goodwin Sands.

The farmer laments that the tide has overleaped his sea-wall, and ruined his wheat-field, and says that God has willed it, and considers not that another foot to his dyke would have rescued his harvest. The householder sees his home in flames, and thinks that a calamity has fallen to try his faith, and not to teach him in future to be careful about his flues. We put down to God what should go to our own stupidity, and we ask the Almighty to interfere miraculously to save us from the results of our own neglect.

In the animal world suffering is never inflicted wantonly or vindictively, and we may be quite sure it is never wantonly or vindictively lavished on man.

Suffering carries its purpose along with it, and is remedial, educative; so that man may

see, if he will, why it is administered, and take precautions against its recurrence. In the Val de Bagne two lateral glaciers close the head of the valley, and arrest the descending torrents. At intervals of years the gathered waters burst their icy girdle, and desolate the lower valley. During whole centuries the peasants opposed to this scourge their ineffectual prayers to a miraculous Madonna who has a shrine overhanging the ice-field. They turned, at length, from the stolid image to living reason, from vulgar superstition to common sense; and by boring the ice-bar let forth the water, and now no longer are threatened by periodic deluges.

I do not deny that there is a correlation between moral and physical forces, for they are the same, seen from different points, and called by different names, as the same peak is Matterhorn here and Cervin there. I do not deny that a moral wrong will produce a physical evil, as arrested motion will flash into sparks, but only so far as morality is another name for natural law. The violation of a moral precept of revelation does often revenge itself, but only because that moral precept is a natural law boiled down to an essence, given proverbial expression. The correlation is never obscure; it

can always be seen except by those who walk in the moonshine of their own fancies.

But we have no evidence that dereliction of a religious duty is punished with physical suffering. And we may justly doubt it, because a connection between natural causes and effects can always be established.

Whenever there is suffering, then there is a cause, and a cause that can be discovered. There is no spontaneous generation of evils. No pestilence runs riot which has not escaped from a sealed jar, and the liberated Jin threatens death and can only be reduced to harmlessness by him who can seal him up again. Every fever has sprung from a germ, or is produced by arrested natural forces. There is no social disorder which does not point out whence it arises. There is no political disturbance without a festering wrong, and till that wrong be righted insurrection or revolution must be chronic. The health of the body, and social happiness and political well-being are all tokens of observance of moral law; and moral law is simply directive force impressed on all life, individual and social, impelling it to evolution into the highest and most perfect forms of which the individual or the social body is capable. Where the creature

of God fulfils the natural conditions, it is in health. Where the social fabric is held in equipoise between give and take, and the right of the one limits, but does not encroach on and overwhelm the right of another, there is contentment ; and where in the state the just proportion is observed between authority and liberty, there is tranquillity. But where the creature of God oversteps the bounds of its right in Nature's scheme, there is pain ; where the social body forces that life which is artificial in the place of that which is natural, then misery ensues ; and where authority crushes the liberty out of the subject, revolution or ruin is the alternative.

How true is the sentence of Job : " Behold the fear of the Lord !—that is wisdom." The fear of the Lord operating by the laws He has imposed on Creation, and not arbitrarily. The fear of the Lord acting through periodical floods bids the wise man build his house on the rock, and avoid the sand, which marks the extent to which the river is wont to overflow. The fear of the Lord scattering the fever germs makes man wise to trap his drains, and shut the mouths of those dragons that exhale poison. The fear of the Lord who rideth upon the wings

of the wind, and walketh on the waters, drives the merchant to discard worm-eaten boats, and be wary lest he overload his vessels. The fear of the Lord shaking His hand over our crowded jails is teaching men wisdom to multiply schools. The fear of the Lord shouting with the voice of the people gives the wisdom which breaks down despotism, and establishes political justice.

As long as men looked to saintly relics and miraculous images to cure maladies and avert catastrophes, so long God spoke in vain; like the deaf adder, man stopped his ears, and a rational view of Nature and study of her laws was impossible. But the faith which looks everywhere for judgments is scarcely less gross a superstition and not a whit less obstructive.

Does religious error or false worship entail no suffering? Most certainly it does, but not in the natural sphere.

The sun shines on the Catholic and Protestant, on the heathen and on the Christian, on the infidel and on the believer, with perfect impartiality. The lightning strikes the just man as often as the sinner; the pestilence sweeps away the innocent babe and the hardened criminal. The reformed does not enjoy ruder health than the *un*reformed.

But there exists a class of suffering which does bear a close connexion with the religious, the spiritual life. The soul of man has got its dynamic impulse as well as the intellect, and as well as the body. To grow and develop is the law impressed on body, mind, and soul. If the growth and development of the body be arrested, it suffers and dies. It is the same with the mind. It is the same also with the soul. Each has its walk in its special plane, and its joys and sorrows lie on these several planes.

Man's relations with God are spiritual, and his pleasures and pains are ghostly.

The soul has her sunny days, and her starless nights, her winter frost and her summer glow, her laughter and her tears, and in her intercourse with God, spiritual suffering has its mission to turn her out of error and lead her into truth.

Sometimes, no doubt, the angel of spiritual guidance holding the drawn sword may drive man blindly against a wall and crush his foot,—religious insensibleness to truth and persistency in error may lead to physical evils, for all forces in the world are correlated, but the connexion is never so hidden as not to reveal itself to the eye that seeks it.

V.

SUFFERING EVIDENTIAL.

EXOD. xix. 9.

The Lord said, "Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud."

IN my last lecture I spoke of the fruit of physical suffering, and I showed how that it was educative. I only touched lightly on spiritual suffering, for I proposed devoting this conference to this subject,—to the wants, the errors, and the agonies of the soul.

That spiritual suffering exists may be wholly doubted by those who have never experienced it. He that enjoys health is impatient of the languors and aches of the sickly. To speak to the clown of the delights and distresses of the artistic sense is to address him in a language of which he knows nothing. And the active man of business, whose horizon is made up of ledgers, and whose heart beats responsive solely to the pulse of the stocks, is liable to

disbelieve in a spiritual world of pleasures and of pains.

And spiritual suffering may not be very acute in some, and therefore they may doubt its intensity in other breasts. The soul with the capacity of a thimble has its consolations dripped from a minim measure, and its sorrows are as few and contracted. A nutshell will not contain much gall or much honey.

The soul is that portion of man which enables him to see God.

The body perceives phenomena, the mind generalises on these phenomena; the soul traces them to their first cause.

The mind takes the materials supplied by the senses, studies them, and discovers the law that rules them. The soul follows that law up to its source in God.

The body perceives through the senses. The mind operates through reason. The soul sees by faith.

The senses carry conviction with them of the real existence of the substances they perceive. Reason produces evidences of the real existence of law in the phenomena it studies. Faith conveys assurance of the real existence of the God it sees.

Faith is not a faculty for perceiving the existence of substances; it is not a faculty for grasping the law that threads them, but solely the faculty of seeing God.

Reason is not a faculty for sensational perception, it is not capable of demonstrating truth, in the spiritual order. It may argue that because there is law, there is therefore a Lawgiver, because there is a chain of causes and effects, there must be a First Cause,—but it can equally argue that law is but the resultant of necessity, and forces are effects when viewed from one side, and causes when viewed from the other, and that the chain revolves in a circle and has no beginning. Every demonstration of God rests on an arbitrary assumption, and leads only to a probability. The reason cannot prove the existence of God, the soul, of any spiritual truth, for that is not its province. What the reason argues about unsuccessfully, the soul instinctively perceives. Demonstrations of spiritual verities are the work of Sisyphus; from whatever side attempted, they are all laborious and all ineffectual.

Faith may be assisted, but never produced by reason; it is an intuition, and not a logical

deduction. God declines to be discovered by a process ending with Q.E.D.

Faith is no more a faculty of the mind than it is a sense of the body. It is the eye of the soul.

The senses of the child need a certain amount of experimental education before they distinguish distances, directions, weight, and size. The infant will grasp at the moon and overreach an apple. But it very soon learns, after a series of failures or partial successes, to judge correctly in these particulars.

The mind of the child in like manner requires education. The education given it is the concentration of the discoveries of preceding generations. The instinct of the animal is shaped by transmission of the former experiences of its progenitors; but in the case of intelligence, which in man takes the place of instinct, this education is effected by oral instruction.

When a child is told that the world is round, into that one sentence is condensed the experiments, researches, and discoveries of whole centuries. If instruction were not communicated on, say this point, the child would be thrown

And faith,—a positive faith, is a real rest and joy and fortification to the soul. Without it, it is in unrest and anxiety, in distress and want. There is a void and nothing to fill it. When I speak of the faith of a little child as a real anchor of its soul, I am tempted to mention a circumstance which I have good reason for believing to be true. And I will relate it as an illustration. In a child's hospital, the other day, a little girl was laid suffering from partial fracture of the hip, accompanied by painful abscesses. It became necessary that the child's leg should be removed, but there was some doubt whether she could bear it, being much exhausted. The information was conveyed to her by the sister in charge that next day the operation was to be performed, and that it would be a painful one. In the evening the sister heard the child-patients in the ward talking the matter over. "Sister said that it would be a very dreadful pain to bear, and that Mary must pray God to help her through it," said one. And after much discussion the children decided to pray together that He might strengthen Mary, and that the doctor might not be allowed to hurt her very much.

And there arose in the ward a concert of little voices to Jesus Christ who loveth children and suffereth them to come unto Him.

But then a doubt sprang up. There were many Marys in the ward; how was Christ when he visited the sleeping hospital to discover which patient needed His grace?

"I know," said the Mary in question, "I will cross my arms on my breast, and go to sleep so." And then again rose the united prayer for help for the little Mary who should lie all night with arms crossed.

In that night He who heareth prayer called the little spirit home.

Those of you who have lived much abroad, or have been observant travellers, can hardly have failed to contrast the spiritual content and happiness of Catholics, especially of the lower classes, with the restlessness and excitability of Protestants. You cannot pass the Gemmi or cross the Scheldt without observing it written on the brow, or speaking through the eyes. The reason is that the former have a positive faith, containing no doubt a great deal of superstition along with truth, but still a positive faith, on which to build, whereas the latter have one which is negative and experimental. The

Catholic has his faith found for him, the latter has to make one for himself. The former is given his diet, consisting of wheat and chaff, and he must accommodate his stomach to the food. The latter is set in a wood, and has to seek his subsistence for himself, and try by experiment what berries are nutritious, and what are poisonous. He plucks the strawberry with hesitation, because he has already suffered from the arum. He fears as he eats the whortleberry, having almost died from the nightshade.

The faith that has grown out of struggles is, no doubt, the most precious, but it is less sunny. Ragged fragments of storm-cloud to the last mar its sky.

The child that has cost its mother most pain and anxiety is always her best beloved, and the faith born with anguish, and which has wrung blood from the heart, is the most prized.

There is the difference between the two faiths—that accepted and that acquired—of cast-iron and hammered steel. Both are excellent, but the qualities are different, and the texture is different. One is crystalline, the other fibrous; one is solid, the other tough.

Living truths of religion that build in the

human heart are disposed to make their nests of rags and twigs and straw, to collect about them very much rubbish, but therewith to be at home, and to sing all day. And living truths of religion, when caught and caged in dogmatic confessions, and iron articles, are apt to pine as prisoners, and remain sterile. Faith flourishes in the heart, but fossilizes in the brain. There are beliefs, like flowers, which will not bear potting.

The true destiny of man consists in the co-ordinate development of body, mind, and soul, and the elimination or suppression of any one of these factors leaves him imperfect.

But, practically, it is exceedingly difficult for man to develop all three simultaneously, and allow to each its legitimate expansion. Life is short, and the demands made on man are so exacting that he has not time to devote himself to the cultivation of all his powers.

There is but a fixed amount of energy seated in the system to be expended, and this is often taxed to the full by the claims of existence. An agricultural labourer has to exert his muscles all day, and he has little force left to drive his mind into active pursuit of knowledge. The

motive power in him has passed away down the plough-shank into the furrow. It is gone from him, and the Leyden jar within is exhausted.

An article-writer for the daily press has his brain in unflagging excitability, and the vital force he possesses is translated into print and used up. Perhaps the body, perhaps the soul, suffers; both must be more or less overlooked.

The town parson is so occupied with his spiritual work that he has no time to study. I have heard him lament it repeatedly. It cannot be otherwise. All the momentum of life is cast on spiritual advancement, and mental growth must give way.

As a general rule, in the battle of life there is so much to occupy the mind, and attract the attention of the body, that the soul is neglected, —it is treated as Mrs. Rawdon Crawley brought up her boy—kept out of sight somewhere in the attics, and its voice is muffled behind double doors, so that its very existence is forgotten.

It is in many points painful to compare the conditions of the same mind in childhood and in mature age. The mind of a child is like a spring meadow breaking into varied flower, teeming with promise, giving earnest of powers that ask but the sun to bring them forth. But

prava necessitas runs her plough through the rich soil, and it becomes—not a flowery wilderness, but a turnip field.

It is necessary for the excellence of the turnips that the field should be weeded of every other herb and every flower. The worker in any department is driven to eliminate from his soul every other craving, every other life, which may turn aside and consume his energies.

It has been observed that in an ant-heap only two ants act as purveyors to the whole community. The rest remain inert. But if these two workers be removed, two others are detailed to be food collectors. Man's constitution is regulated not differently from the ant-hill. Some two or three of his teeming powers do all the work, the rest remain passive, and only, if accident arrest the bread-winners, are the other faculties put in requisition.

Not many months ago I was speaking to a village plumber, and a few chords were struck on a piano in an adjoining room. The man stopped short, listened, and then said in a shaking voice, "I cannot help it, music makes me cry." He was an old man, and had never left his remote village, nor heard better music than the twanging of fiddles and twittering of

flutes in the parish choir. Yet here was the soul of a musician, of a genius probably, which had never been allowed room to grow and flower.

And it is sometimes so with the soul—it is allowed no elbow-room, it is afforded no leisure. It creeps about in its little attic, till suddenly with delirious shriek and fevered face it bursts into the midst of the life that had ignored it, to terrify and to awe,—but as soon as possible to be huddled back to its bed in the garret.

The soul has the faculty of seeing God. Faith focusses the spiritual eye, so that it looks not into an undefined blaze.

Unless the soul sees God it feels a want more or less acute: in some a gnawing pain continually felt, in others spasmodic and acute after long tracts of indifference.

There are souls, no doubt, so sluggish and so dull, that they are not sensitive to much pain or pleasure in the absence, or the possession, of a positive belief. The sight of God is no great joy to them, and the loss of God no very great privation. Souls are much like minds, of different degrees of sensitiveness, of various powers. As there are unenquiring minds so there are uncraving souls; as there are minds with-

out interests, so there are souls without eagerness.

But I am not going to speak of these. Spiritual pain is felt either through the absence of true knowledge of God, or through loss of sight of Him. Error, or loss of faith, are the great causes of suffering to the soul.

Every religion has been a groping after God. The existence of religions, however false or degraded, proves that the souls of those who elaborated them have felt the want of God. There has been a period of restless feeling about, till at last something has been found, which, if not God, is at least of God. For every religion enshrines a truth.

The lowest form of belief is the Schamanism of the Turanians of Siberia. And yet the poor Ostjak has in his vague religion a ray of truth, of God, entering and illuminating his contracted soul. "What is Turu (God)?" asked a traveller of a heathen on the frozen Tundra. The Ostjak looked bewildered. He could not define his belief. At last he pointed to the sky. "That is Turu!" and to the vast stretching plain, "And that is Turu!" and to the rolling Yenisei, "There also!" and then to the heath-flower at his feet, "And here also!"

Every change in religion is proof of a movement in the human soul, a dissatisfaction, because it had not seen the whole truth.

Greek mythology went through several stages. At first the gods were only the forces of nature, and then, divine beings ruling these forces. Then, again, moral principles governing the spirits of men as well as the powers of the universe. And lastly, the philosophers saw that all moral and all physical forces emanated from One. That which seemed plural rose out of, and returned to, unity. And the philosophers spoke, and the poets sang of *God*, not gods. Each step was reached through a trouble of the soul, which was not satisfied with the imperfect light that shone on it, and struggled upward to light more clear. The fetishism of the Negro, the idolatry of the Greek, the Eucharistic adoration of the Catholic are all expressions of the same want—objective worship. The self-absorption of the Buddhist, the ecstasy of the ascetic, the revivalism of the Ranter, are all the result of a subjective tendency in the human soul. The soul wants to give and wants to receive, and men swing in unease from the giving to the receiving, and find in neither alone all the requirements of the soul appeased.

If we were to take the religions of the world and spread them out before us, and tabulate their characteristics, we should be able to form a register of the corresponding wants of the human spirit.

Every religion marks the existence of a want. And every reformation indicates the awaking, the assertion, of a new one.

To bring this down to our own experience and our own days. How is it that England teems with sects? Simply because the Established Church does not meet every religious requirement of Christian souls. True wisdom would seek to make her bands elastic, and vary her methods to embrace and satisfy all, and not seek to stamp and stiffen and solidify her, as the martyr Geronimo was kneaded into a bed of concrete.

Much better endow the Church of England with centripetal than with centrifugal force; and this can only be done by allowing to grow together in luxuriance objective worship and subjective mysticism; by giving to those who want on either side with full hand, instead of measuring to each in grudged pinches.

In very many persons faith lies dormant. They scarcely know whether they have it or

not. There is a tacit acceptance professed, or an easy indifference felt, about the religious truths taught them. It needs a blow to bring out latent faith, like the spark from the flint.

When one by one the objects which have filled the landscape are withdrawn, then it is that the need for something in which the soul may rest makes itself felt. Persons in easy circumstances, with no great troubles, mental or bodily, life on in happy tranquillity. But when all that has filled the heart, when the ambitions and pleasures of life fail, or are blighted, then there is unrest, a craving, and a cry for God —for something on which to fall back, for some one to whom to cling.

At the approach of old age the faculties of enjoyment are blunted, the mind loses its activity along with the body. The flowers are not so beautiful, the fruit as sweet, the sky as blue, the sun as bright, as in childhood. In life there is no hope, only retrospect,—a sad sitting over the burnt brands, watching the fire palaces fall into grey ash, and the sparks go out.

In a German story a young woman buys back with her hard-earned wages the cuckoo-clock that had belonged to her parents who left

her an orphan in early childhood; and she finds to her distress that the bird has lost half its note. "It is so in everything that belonged to childhood," is the consolation of an old woman. "What sings 'cuckoo' in youth croaks 'cuck' or 'coo' in age." And the moral is: never look back, but ever forwards. Ah! but when there is no forwards, nothing but faculties fading to a vanishing point! Is it not enough to weigh the heart down, and cast it into profound depression?

"Fugit Euro citius tempus edax rerum,"

and it bears away our pleasures on its wings, and leaves inexpressible sadness in its wake. This consciousness has oppressed many a man of ability, whose life has been active and happy.

Some, like the Archbishop of Granada in "Gil Blas," will not face the fact, but others feel it only too acutely. It is this sense of void, as life is closing in, which forms the subdued sad music of the "Earthly Paradise." It was this which weighed so heavily on Charles Dickens in his last years. It is this which has called forth the sad wail from our modern poet:—

It will grow not again, this fruit of my heart,
Smitten with sunbeams, ruined with rain.
The singing seasons divide and depart,
Winter and summer depart in twain.

It will grow not again, it is ruined at root,
The blood-like blossom, the dull red fruit ;
Though the heart yet sickens, the lips yet smart
With sullen savour of poisonous pain.*

It was this horror of the great blank which called forth the wild poetic shriek of the fading actress which startled the world a year or two ago. The "roses and raptures" of youth were over, the mad frolic of spring was at an end, the overflowing cup had been drained, and had left a sickening ache. Ghastly, and grey, and gaunt, stood age and death before her, building her up, covering her face, stifling her screams.

It was the overflow of this great wave of hopeless misery which found expression in a little volume not long ago issued by a blind poet—a poet who had no belief in God or eternity, on whom for a little moment had risen up the light of a woman's love, only speedily to be extinguished in death. And then there remained nothing—nothing but a rocking and a moaning in the blackness which was falling reef on reef, over mind and soul, as already over body, and burying all in a grave.

One of the most striking of modern works of fiction is that† which relates the history of the

* Swinburne, "The Triumph of Time."

† W. von Hillern, "Ein Artz der Seele."

mind of a girl who had been left in childhood to the care of an uncle, who, for purposes of his own, destroyed in her breast her faith in God, and then educated her intellect to the highest pitch, and systematically stamped out from her heart all human affections. There is no time for me to quote to you the description of the little heart in the night, when its faith has been taken from it, in agony trying to pray and unable, stretching out its arms to catch its God, and clasping only emptiness.

The picture is not overdrawn. I might quote to you from Mr. Greg's "Creed of Christendom," the intensely touching and painful confession of the anguish of his soul, as he lost his faith in first one and then another of the dogmas of Christianity.

But to return to the story. Years pass, the young girl, with a masculine intellect and a hardened heart, strives to make herself a name in the literary world as an atheistical, scientific writer; it is the one passion of her life, the craving of her existence. And when she fails, and her hopes are utterly broken, and when with them her health gives way, and the prospect opens before her of an early death, then the horror, the despair of the great black void

that gapes drives her mad. And now I will quote :—

"She fell on her knees. 'O Almighty Nature, hard Mother, who will no more nourish me at thy bosom,' she cried ; 'pity, pity and rescue thy child. Give not over the young creative spirit to extinction, and its vessel to destruction! Thousands breathe and enjoy who are not worthy to receive thy blessing, and me thy priestess thou rejectest!' She lay long so, with wrung, beseeching hands, as though she awaited an answer. All remained still about her, no token of pity came. She recovered herself. 'Nature is inexorable—why do I pray to her? She hears me not, she thinks not, she feels not ; indifferent to all, she sweeps me away, this blind fatality of an eternally revolving machine. Is there no hand to grasp at the spokes? Is there no known Power which can appreciate the value of a life and can say—"Thou art worthy, live?" There must be such. In the torture of this hour I feel it. There must be some other Divinity besides Nature—the spirit which now battles with her in its death agony must—it must have some other refuge, and some higher destiny, than merely to live!' She pressed her

hands to her breast. 'O Faith! Faith!' . . . . And Faith came rushing over her soul with all its terrors, for it is only a loving friend to him who is a friend to it; but to one who has cast it forth, it comes overwhelming, crushing with the force of a tempest. It caught her, it tore that sick soul, as a withered leaf from the tree of knowledge, and swept it away into the night of despair."

If Faith has not been brought to light in many hearts with such anguish, yet there are few who have a living faith who cannot point to some great sorrow, some sharp pain, some vision of terror which has been to them the occasion of faith deepening and acquiring over them a stronger hold.

And so the agony of the soul has its mission: it unseals the eye to God, it is the hand of Ananias, the gall of the fish of Tobias, bidding the scales fall away, and the eye look up, and see the light, see the face of God—and live.

VI.

SUFFERING SACRIFICIAL.

PHIL. iii. 10.

The fellowship of his sufferings.

WHEN the Apostle said, "None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself," he might have added, "And no man suffereth for himself." For it is very evident that the suffering of one man affects more than himself, and is often the cause to others of great advantage. The death of one is the life of another. This seems to be a law stamped on mankind from the hour of birth, when the child wins life at the cost of anguish to another.

In the economy of Nature every plant and insect has its place, and the extinction of one opens the field for the production of another. The moss grows on your lawn and strangles the grass. You lime the soil, murder the moss, and the grass reigns and rejoices over its grave. The massacre of the weeds in your garden is

the gain of the flowers that grow there. You victimise some that others may thrive. The hyacinth bulb buds out fresh bulbs. The flower suffers. You ruthlessly tear away the young bulbs, and consign them to destruction, that the hyacinth may produce splendour of blossom. You prune the fruit tree, you trim the rose. You deliver over the sparrows to death, and the caterpillars multiply and triumph. In the animal and vegetable world the destruction of one individual or race is the gain of other individuals or races. The balance of life must be preserved, and when you subtract a factor here, other factors swell to preserve the equation.

It is so to some extent, though not in the same immediateness, in the world of man.

Let us suppose an island capable of sustaining, at the utmost, a hundred persons. The fruits of the soil, the harvest of the sea, cannot furnish provision for a larger number. Then, when the population swells beyond the hundred, some must be shipped off, in order that the others may live.

For the island substitute the globe. With its limited surface, it can only sustain so many millions of human beings. As the race multiplies, some must be shipped off into another

world, to keep the balance. Those who wave their farewells to our shore are expatriated for our sakes. They depart that we may live.

It has been asked, Why did God not create a fixed number of men, at the first? Then, there being no increase in the numbers, there need have been no death to keep the numbers down.

Say that He had created twelve hundred millions of autocthones, who were to exist in deathless life. What would that mean? Why, it would mean that millions of millions of happy lives would never have been called into existence at all,—that you and I would never have been.

The introduction of death into the system made a limited world capable of containing an unlimited succession of generations of happy creatures. It has been a distinct blessing. But for death, they would never have been called into being. Every creature of God is an articulation of the thoughts of God, an idea in the mind of God taking real existence, as an imagination in the human mind can somehow assume real existence under the touch of musician or painter.

If there had been no death in the world, the

world would have been the congealed thoughts of God—not a manifestation of that mind in incessant activity. The problem set by creation was, how to maintain activity of thought within a rigid limit, and that problem is solved by the limitation of each thought by time and space. The infinite is conditioned by the finite.

Pain is, as I have shown, educative. But all pain is not educative to the individual who suffers. It is so only to the great mass of mankind of which the individual is a part; to the body, of which he is a member, often a very inconsiderable and unconsidered member.

That progress is born of experience, and experience is generated by loss and suffering, is true of the individual.

We are always learning by experience, but we often bitterly regret that we have only learned the lessons of life precisely when life is closing in, and the power and period for utilising our gathered experience is exhausted.

But the experience of one serves the purposes of another. Man being a sociable animal, transmits his experiences to his neighbours and descendants. Experiences pass into traditions, and tradition becomes the guide of life. Men ate, and died of eating, toadstools before man-

kind learned to confine itself to mushrooms. When you warn a child to avoid the poisonous berries of the solanum which it is trying to put into its mouth, that child owes its relief from torture and death to the anguish and fatal experience of some person unknown who ate them in ages past. That person unknown in ages past, by his passion, ransomed the child to-day from the grave. His fatal experience became a world-wide tradition, and that tradition was effective to save a child from death, when allured by a poisonous berry. The death of one has been the salvation of many.

I remember, when I was in France many years ago, living near a lucifer-match manufactory, when matches were dipped first in melted sulphur, and then in hot liquid phosphorus, how frequent and horrible were the accidents occurring from the overheating of the pans containing these inflammable materials.

I remember many a permanently disfigured face, and many permanently contracted hands, and many a coffin carried forth, containing the cinder of a poor child who died in flames of liquid inextinguishable phosphorus. I remember the moans and shrieks all night long of a little sufferer in the same street.

Year after year of accidents served to goad invention to find a remedy ; and now the cruel, treacherous, phosphorus is discarded, and the innocuous chloride of potash occupies its place. The workers in the match manufactories to-day owe their immunity to the agonies, the deaths, and disfigurements of preceding workers at the same business. Hundreds of poor children writhed in torment, were scarred and blinded and crippled and cut short, and by their sufferings brought redemption to their successors.

You know what a demand there is in summer for effervescing drinks ; but you do not know how many and terrible are the accidents that occur in the lemonade and soda-water manufactories ; how the glass bottles explode, and cut, and mangle, the poor boys employed in filling and corking them. They are undergoing their crucifixion, poor children, for the well-being of their successors. For the havoc made amongst them,—the gashed faces, the darkened eyes,—will in time stimulate invention to obviate these accidents.

What does war exhibit to us ? Men suffering for others. Those who fell at Waterloo died for the delivery of Europe from the sway of a despot. They gave their lives for the freedom

of others. The patriots of Switzerland shed their blood for the salvation of their country, at Morat and Nurgarten, not for any profit to themselves. The sentiment of self-sacrifice lived, and was a force, even in the breasts of those mistaken men who reigned by terror in the French Revolution, who believed in no God, and no immortality. "Que mon nom soit flêtri; pourvu que la France soit libre," said Danton.

The Golgotha of white girls' skulls gnawed by dogs, the festering heaps of dead in the church and graveyards of Batak will do their work, and emancipate Bulgaria. At Gainsborough, during the cholera, it was noticed that all the lower portion of the town suffered, whilst the upper part was comparatively free. This led to investigation of the cause, and the discovery that the inhabitants of the lower town fetched their water from the river through a passage communicating with it below the point where the sewers discharged into it. The magistrates bricked up the passage. The angry, ignorant people tore down the obstruction. It was rebuilt and guarded by the police, and the inhabitants were forced to draw water from a pure source. The cholera was at once arrested,

and disappeared soon after. The victims had suffered to teach the survivors wisdom, and if the Gainsborough people of the present day enjoy robust health, they owe it to the martyrdom of their predecessors, whose death pointed out to them the fruitful source of disease in the town.

Some more mashing and mangling of passengers on our national instrument of destruction,—the railway, will perhaps force the Government to insist on passenger and goods traffic being kept to distinct lines of rails; and in a future—let us hope not remote—age, travellers will thank for their security those who suffered and died in our days.

Thus, we see how that suffering humanity works out the redemption of mankind from pain and death.

S. Paul speaks of Christians filling up the measure of the sufferings of Christ. He expresses the great truth that all progress is bought through pain, and that Christ, as the Head of Humanity, is one with mankind in bringing redemption from error and ignorance and crime by suffering. The whole of mankind is crucified with Him daily, and daily is working out by sacrifice the way to light, and peace

and perfection. When He was crucified, He suffered with all humanity, stood in the fore-front; as priest, expiating with the people; as head, aching with the members.

There is no progress without suffering. There is no emancipation without a martyrdom. The lamb is slain before every *In exitu Israel.* The cross is set up before every discharge of prisoners of hope.

This consideration brings out clearly the moral fitness of the Passion of Christ. He, the God-man, would not escape the common lot of man; perhaps we may venture to say, that, being very man, a unit of the great sum of humanity, He could not avoid the law which weighs on the whole race, and on every individual making up its sum.

When the members suffer, the Head must sweat drops of blood, for the head is tied to all the members by muscles, nerves, and tissue. The intercourse between them is most close, and if the members reap advantage by the wisdom of the head, the head must sink and throb at the lesion of the extremities.

It would have been against all precedent, it would have been contrary to the established order, if the Gospel, which was to bring such

incalculable blessings to the world, had not been sealed with blood ; if the soul had been released from the trammels of Talmudism or the degradation of idolatry without a Calvary or a Colosseum. Where is the nation that has obtained free institutions without blood ? Where is the religion that has reformed itself of abuses without showing a scar ? Where is the soul with any greatness, any nobility about it, that has not won victories with sweat and wounds ?

It is said that if a thing be worth doing, it is worth doing well. That is to say, if a thing be of any value, it has cost labour. Machine-made ornament disgusts, that which is hand-made pleases. The latter pleases because we know it to be the work of poor, clumsy, toil-some man. Its true delightfulness depends on one discovering in it the record of the thoughts, the trials, the heart-breakings, the laborious self-denial of man.*

Labour is pain modified, softened, extenuated and sweetened. It is the sacrifice of time, of thought, of care, of self, which gives value and charm to any work. A man has given part of

* Compare Ruskin, Seven Lamps of Architecture, c. ii, 19.

himself to it, and therefore it is esteemed. What has cost no thought, no labour, no sacrifice, is vulgar, and profitless, and is cast indifferently aside.

When Christ suffered, it was to win for Himself the prerogative of being very bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh.

Every member of the community is a mesh in a mighty net, and every thread is a nerve of communication with every other.

A glassful of water is composed of an infinity of atomic globules lying together like shot. If you touch the surface of the water ever so lightly, with but the point of a needle, the impression is transmitted through the entire bulk. Every little globule is pressed against those that surround it, and the most remote of the little watery balls is sensible to the lightest touch impressed on any other.

You cannot utter a note but you set waves of air in motion, and they ripple on, growing less as they widen in circumference, infinitesimally less, but they never cease to move till they die into the vast expanse of void outside our atmosphere. Not a sound is uttered that is not vibrated through the circle of the world's atmosphere, long, long after it has ceased to be registered by the ear.

Christ by becoming man became a mesh in the net of thrilling nerve, one of the globules in the water vessel, an element of the encircling air. What affects one affects all. What affects all affects each.

The Incarnation and the Atonement were no violations of the law of Nature; these mysterious and awful events neither broke its continuity, nor superseded its obligations.

The principle of sacrifice, as I suggested in a former lecture, lies at the root of all social life. As soon as men unite to form the first elements of the State, they are forced to sacrifice somewhat of their independence to obtain compensating advantages. At first neither the sacrifice demanded, nor the advantage offered, is very great, but still sacrifice has taken its place as a recognised factor in social life.

The member of a community cannot follow the restless determinations of his will without restraint. As long as he is an independent individual, he is free to execute whatever his will impels him to, and the only limit to his freedom is his capacity for carrying out his caprices. But when he enters within the bounds of common life, his liberty is circumscribed, he can no longer take what he likes, or

do what he likes. He has made an oblation, more or less complete, to the commonwealth of his independence. As society and political life organises itself and becomes elaborate, the sacrifice is still exacted, and becomes more and more compulsory. No man in a civilised community is free to comport himself wholly as he pleases, and to shake off, at his will, the restraints imposed upon him by social and political organisation. A Pampas Indian may whoop, and race his horse, and fling his lasso, where he will, as a member of the rude tribal community on the American plains. No Englishman would be allowed to execute the same performance down the Strand. In the earliest type of social life, the family, the principle of sacrifice, intervenes. The mother, the father, both do sacrifice of their time, their comfort, their labour, their thoughts, for the infant born to them—not expecting, not calculating on, any return.

The moment a man enters into union with others, he has to make up his mind to pay his subscription, to make some sacrifice for his union, be it that of the family, or the church, or the nation. Wherever there is corporate life there must be sacrifice. It is a law

admitting no exceptions, an obligation from which there is no escape.

But now consider what awful sacrifices mankind has exacted from the individual in his growth from barbarism into civilisation! Consider the Servile Wars and Jacqueries, and Wars of the Peasants, put down with wholesale butchery, before the slave and the serf could win emancipation from the master or the soil! Consider the fires of the Inquisition, the massacres by Alva, the atrocities of Cromwell, what wholesale horrors, before the principle of Religious Toleration could emerge into light! Consider the Civil Wars, the Great Rebellion in England, the Revolt of the Netherlands, the Revolution in France, before the despotism of the sovereign was broken, and the rights of the subjects obtained acknowledgment and expression!

It would seem that no human suffering is in vain. It all serves to fill a great crucible, whence issues pure gold. It wins, it merits, good, if not for the sufferer, at least for others. We do not see what each pang profits, but we may be sure it is remedial somewhere. There is, as it were, a great sea of tears, from which rise the vapours that refresh the earth,

and produce the flowers. The rivers of sorrow run down into the great reservoir, but return again in blessing.

Christ died upon the cross. His Passion partook of the nature of all human suffering, and was sacrificial.

"One of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water."

Hearts had been pierced since the day when the dead body of Abel was brought home and laid on Eve's knee, till the second Abel was taken down from the cross, and his dead head reposed on the breast of His Mother, and the foretold sword pierced through her own soul also. But every pierced side had poured forth only blood, the essence of pain, the current of life. Tears had been hopeless, wounds unstaunched, despair unrelieved, darkness uncleft by any ray. Blood had oozed forth in plenty from many a hand and foot and side, but only blood draining life away.

Now, from the side of Jesus flow blood and water,—the blood of pain, the water of comfort,—the stain, and that which cleanses,—the drain of life, and life's renewal.

I have seen in the heart of a salt-mine at

Hallein, in Salzburg, two springs flowing side by side, one intensely bitter, the other perfectly sweet. It is so in the Christian world. The two springs flow together from the same mine, the pierced side of Christ,—the bitter blood, the sweet water,—the salt spring of pain, the fresh fountain of comfort,—the blood ebbing to death, the water quickening to regeneration.

Suffering is not in vain, it is sacrificial. That which was hidden to the old world, or only guessed, was revealed by the Cross of Calvary. Suffering is not for nothing. It is accounted for, it is registered, and it wins blessings. One soweth and another reapeth, but both shall rejoice together at the Harvest Day.

THE END.